

SCHAUMBURG, IL – As part of her continuing efforts to address and help families confront the rise of Internet-based crime, on Tuesday Congresswoman Melissa Bean (IL-8) announced her introduction of the *SAFER NET Act* ([HR 4982](#)) at an Internet Safety forum in Wauconda hosted by the Lake County Sheriff's Department.

SAFER NET (Safeguarding America's Families by Enhancing and Reorganizing New and Efficient Technologies) will streamline and improve existing efforts to educate families and consumers while promoting Internet safety. This ground-breaking legislation will establish an *Office of Internet Safety and Public Awareness*, a clearinghouse and primary portal to Internet safety resources. Through its website and outreach efforts, the *Office of Internet Safety and Public Awareness* will provide easy access to better organized, understandable, and up-to-date information on safe Internet use.

“The Internet provides kids access to the world, but it can also bring a world of dangers into their homes. With more than 87% of teens using the Internet on a regular basis, this isn't an issue we can afford to ignore,” Bean said. “SAFER NET will help families protect their children from on-line predators by improving the accessibility, coordination and efficiency of the many government resources that already exist for that purpose.”

The *Office of Internet Safety and Public Awareness* will give Internet users unprecedented access to information about identity theft, cyber crime, and child predators as well as countermeasures and “best practices” for consumers and businesses alike. Grants to promote safe Internet use will also be channeled and dispersed through the *Office of Internet Safety and Public Awareness*. Creation of the office will require a relatively minor reorganization of the numerous, although splintered, efforts already committed to combating Internet-based crime.

According to *Highlights of the Youth Internet Safety Survey* conducted by the U.S. Department of Justice, one in five children (10 to 17 years old) is sexually solicited online. Last year, more than 685,000 consumer fraud and identity theft complaints were reported to the Federal Trade Commission, 46% of which were Internet-related. These cyber crimes resulted in a loss for consumers of over \$335 million.

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